Contents: Mother Poetry Correspondence Local News

NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services
APRIL/MAY 1994 VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

Dear Mom,

On the occasion of your 90th birthday in June, and your 68th Mother's Day as a mother:

by Peggy Walsh

In the past couple of years it seems you've been checking in with your kids to see what sort of mother you've been, and maybe reflect on what sort of life you've lived.

As I told you on the phone a while back, I didn't mind being 'dragged around' to various places you used to visit. There was always some sort of adventure for me to find on a farm, off in the woods, around the neighborhood.

Although I didn't grow up with my siblings as children, they've advanced me through life and showed me what it's like to be 11, 15, 21 years older. It is reassuring to see a strong 35 or 50 year old sister when I'm just half that age. They keep me feeling younger. At some point I grew into a peer relationship with my sisters, even as my nieces (and nephews) followed close behind me.

I feel I had advantages the rest of your kids didn't; they lived through lean times during the Depression and WWII. There seemed to be less of a money crunch, and more free time. I got to travel (to Roanoke/Pulaski VA, Niagara Falls, Gettysburg, Miami Beach, as well as the usual trips to the shore and New York), and still have the habit.

A year ago I was in a couple of women's writing workshops, and heard bits of other women's life stories. I'm appalled and amazed at the damage mothers did these daughters. We were asked to write 'the legend of our birth.' One woman started by saying, 'Bad, bad baby; bad baby almost killed its mother; colicky nuisance; disappointed you're a girl....' There were other tales of control and anger, martyred parents, misdirected expectations. 'How could you do this to us! You know we need/expect you to...,' when the grown child didn't go to the college of the parents' choice, or enter the profession of the parent's choice, or have children on schedule. Another assignment was to write about being on a beach by some water. I was off the beach into the ocean, floating down the river, loving the water. Another woman was in a house way up on a cliff, looking down at the sea through a picture window. That's nice, but her reason for being so far removed is a shame. Her mother had caused her to be afraid of water and outdoors. When she was a child, her mother controlled her every move. She was taught that being wet was dangerous, and she could only go out in rain or walk on wet grass if Mom held her hand. The thought of playing in a sprinkler was terrifying. Now this woman is 52 years old, and still can't go out if it's raining.

I'm glad I didn't grow up related to any of those sorts of people. If anything, I grew up with less guidance than might have been useful. I think this is a common circumstance of last-born children; growing up in a household of a lot of people, there's less interference with the individual. You didn't teach me much in the way of social graces, but I don't hold that against you. I think it's a talent you hadn't been taught, either, and we can manage to get by.

You've given the example of being curious, of not only being not prejudiced, but valuing diversity in other types of people, and accepting people as they are, whatever their peculiarity. I learned by your good example to be an asset to my community. I vote, give blood, do volunteer work, and interfere (constructively, but not intrusively, I hope) in people's lives (at their invitation). I'm known in the Northwest for my pies and jam-making, learned in your home.

I've been called 'stable' by others. I think my stability and reassuring tendency to handle crisis calmly comes from a common-sense upbringing in a large, safe, but not boring family. We were not a crisis-

Continued on Page 15

Join! $10-50/year, sliding scale.
I want to wear my bisexuality in my wallet. Make me a card carrying bisexual! Enclosed is $________ for a one-year membership.

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I want to receive the latest bi news, opinions, writing and art six times a year. Enclosed is $________ for a one-year subscription.

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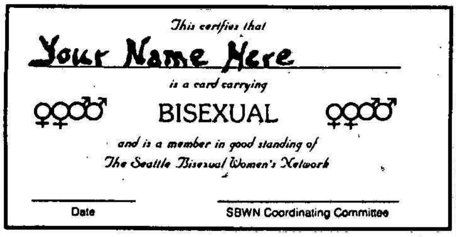
All contributions are tax-deductible
Please enclose cash, or checks made payable to SBWN
Send to: SBWN, PO Box 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98103-0645

Join the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network and become a card-carrying bisexual!


This certifies that
Your Name Here
is a card carrying
♀♀♂♂ BISEXUAL ♀♀♂♂
and is a member in good standing of
The Seattle Bisexual Women's Network

Date
SBWN Coordinating Committee

Memberships are $10-50 a year on a sliding scale, and are open to women everywhere. Members are entitled to discounts on events and purchases. See mail-in form above.

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network and to promote, in both the heterosexual world and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community that is united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face on the bases of our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We are invested in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

Editors:
Lisa Coyote, Lizabeth Coller,
Peggy Walsh

Distribution:
Denise O, Theressia H, Bettykay,
and volunteers

North Bi Northwest is the bimonthly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, as well as creative writing, photographs, graphic art, and an advice column.

We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, journals, theory, conversations, and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone. We accept input on disk with hard copy (Mac or PC), typed, or handwritten if it's legible.

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SEATTLE
BISEXUAL
WOMEN'S
NETWORK
PO Box 30645
Greenwood Station
Seattle WA 98103-0645

Deadline for submissions to the next issue: May 2. (see address above).

SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription (see above) or at area bookstores and newsstands, including: in Seattle, **Red and Black Books, Beyond the Closet, Bailey Coy Books, Fremont Place Book Company**, and in Tacoma, **Imprints**.

North Bi Northwest is printed on bi paper! (50% recycled).. ♻

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services, PO Box 22228, Seattle, WA 98122-0228. (Not for correspondence with SBWN or North Bi Northwest).

From the Editors...

There's a lot more work and time involved in putting out a newsletter than we realized, but it's a lot of fun, and we feel privileged to read the personal work people send us! Thanks to all who have given us such wonderful materials for *North Bi Northwest.* Keep it coming! In some cases, you may not see your submission printed as soon as you'd hoped; please be patient, we're saving some for future editions.

The range of sentiment is impressive in this issue's sweet/sour viewpoints of Mom. Now that we've seen Mom, anyone have input on Dad? Other suggested topics for June's issue are: ✍ Stonewall (where were you 25 years ago on June 26?), ✍ Summer doings, what you do when the weather gets warmer, ✍ The joys (or not) of dating women. See page 2 for submission information.

Write us (either to the NbiNW staff or to individual contributors) if you are moved by anything you have read here.

We offer deep thanks to Paula W. for giving us a computer. It makes newsletter production so much easier, and will be put to additional tasks in the future!

Letters, letters, letters

Dear Editors,

Enclosed in your last newsletter *North bi Northwest* I found your note, asking us who reads the newsletter. I am the first to receive it and I can tell you I always read it. Then I hand it to one of the other members of our group, and so on. Although the newsletter is made for bisexual women, most of the regular readers are male. Finally it ends up at one of our meetings where others could read it. We, or at least I, enjoy receiving and reading the newsletter.

At this moment our group is not as active as it was before, because gradually the attendance to our activities has somewhat diminished. To us it seems that in the Netherlands a lot of bi-people have moved to either straight or gay scenes. I have heard this from other bi-groups in Holland, too. Some gay scenes are also withering a bit: some straight economics (bars, discos, etc.) have integrated some of the gay extravaganzas, f.i. a hard-core gay night in an otherwise straight disco. I would say it is the dialectics of straight-gay expressions.

I will add some information about the organisation in which our group functions.

The NVSH is an organisation working in the field of reform of sexual behavior in the Netherlands and it exists already since 1881, when it was grounded to provide (working class) women with information on, and products for the prevention of pregnancies (at first providing them with diaphragms and later also condoms and the pill). Of course the objectives have changed during these more than 100 years: emancipation (both men and women), liberation of sexual minorities, good information on sexuality and relationships for children and preferably during primary school, etc. Nowadays the organisation also provides the service of a national help-line for all questions regarding sex and relationships.

In some local centers of the NVSH, bi-activities are incidentally or sometimes structurally organised. As far as we in Haarlem know, the local branch in Eindhoven has also monthly meetings.

If you would like to know more about our group or NVSH, you can ask me and I will gladly reply.

I want to wish you and your friends/co-workers success with SBWN.

Sincerely,
Daan van Rijn
werkgroep biseksualiteit van de NVSH-Haarlem
c/o Daan van Rijn
Parklaan 69
2011 KS Haarlem
The Netherlands
Phone: 023-314188

Dear Editors,

I couldn't procrastinate the opportunity to comment on the latest - wonderful - issue of *North Bi Northwest*. They are always very good, but I have reread the February/March issue several times.

Please pass on these comments to the appropriate authoresses:

* Kathleen O'Bryan - You put into words some of my exact feelings, though I have never heard anyone else express them. Goddess bless you!

* Toni Crane - Your story was, and is, ecstasy on paper.

* Staci K - *Time Will Tell* was absolutely correct, as I have found out.

Thanks for being there!

Sincerely,
Diana
Goldendale, Wa.

* * *

Dear Editors,

Here's what happens to *North Bi Northwest* when it gets to our box. It is forwarded to the secretary (so I read it first), then I take it along to one of our meetings at the London Women's Centre, where we have a box to keep all our membership info, etc, and it is left there so that any of our members who attend meetings can look at it. This is a fairly new arrangement; in the past, when the group was smaller we used to just pass it 'round, but now that we have over sixty members and meet weekly this is not feasible any more! We do try to ensure that as many women as possible get to see it, and it is appreciated.

Keep up the good work!

Best wishes,
Claire
Secretary London (England) Bisexual Women's Group

The Hell with Mother's Day

by Ash

Mother's day is day of obligation. Of fulfilling everyone else's expectations of how a dutiful daughter should be. Hogwash.

My mother was a bitch. She taught me very little useful, and a hell of a lot of shit. She taught me how little I counted, how unimportant my feelings were, that my body was not my own, that it was expected that it would be used by others, that if my brother hurt me - it was my fault for letting him. If someone treated me poorly - it was my fault for allowing it to happen. When my brother raped me - it wasn't that big a deal, it didn't matter, and after all, it was my fault for being a slut. Of course I couldn't help it, it was just the way I was, not quite good enough, a victim. She taught me well that I couldn't - I couldn't do anything, be anything, think anything or deserve anything.

Why should I ever want to celebrate a day that repeats endlessly how selfless, how good, how holy my mother is - just because she gave birth to 6 kids. No, I don't celebrate mother's day. I never had a mother. I had someone who called herself that, but didn't have the slightest idea how to act like one. She doesn't deserve recognition, except as a lousy mother. But we don't have "Bad Mother's Day," It is assumed that all mothers are worthy of recognition.

Maybe some are. Maybe that's what makes me so angry and hurts so much. I never had a chance to know someone who was a *real* mother - like the kind of mother that Mother's day is supposed to honor. It's a grief to me, that of all the characteristics a mother is assumed to possess, just by virtue of giving birth or raising a child, I can find none of them in my mother's memory.

I wonder if there is any way that we can redeem our holidays to celebrate reality? To celebrate the fact that six kids survived my mother's lousy parenting, some better than others. To celebrate the fact that I have the strength to learn to not be a victim, and maybe, just maybe, be more than just a survivor too. There is also a celebration in the fact that even just surviving teaches you something. And maybe that lesson can mean that the next generation, or some future generation, won't have to survive, but can truly learn to thrive. ▼

Polyfidelity potlucks are prospering!

Seattle's Polyfidelity Potluck group is a happening thing these days!

It began a few years ago with a monthly women's polyfidelity support group affiliated with SBWN, grew a bit by word of mouth, and became an occasional potluck/discussion group including women and men. Starting last September, the group has become more organized and started outreach, selectively, to the general public. They have a small library of books and newsletters on non-monogamy.

Questionnaire responses indicate people already in the group want more frequent (than bimonthly) events, general discussions rather than lectures.

People who answered the recent ad (in *the Stranger*) were delighted to find out about the existence of this group. It offers an end to the isolation people in multi-partner relationships feel. In the check-out at the end of a recent potluck, one man introduced his partners, man and woman, and two children, saying, 'This is my family and I love them very much. This is the only place I've been able to freely say this. I'm grateful.'

Talks have included: how/where to meet people, jealousy, living with children, coming/being out, intentional community.

Anyone involved in, interested in, or curious about alternative relationship styles is invited. All sexual orientations and genders are welcome. Anonymity is respected.

The next Polyfidelity Potluck is Saturday, May 14, 6:30pm. Phone 728-4533 to offer suggestions or get information. ▼

⚥⚥⚥

Media Bites

Coming Movies:

Savage Nights, a prize-winning French film about a bisexual man who is HIV positive, but continues to have anonymous sex with strangers. Won the Cesar awards for Best Picture, Best First Film, and Best Female Newcomer. Directed by Cyril Collard.

Threesome, starring Lara Flynn Boyle, Josh Charles, Stephen Baldwin. Baldwin says, 'I want to have sex with her, she wants to have sex with him, he wants to have sex with me.

The Bellevue, Wa, Journal American now calls their gay and lesbian personal ad section 'alternative lifestyles.' The sections used to be called 'Men Seeking Men' and 'Women Seeking Women.' This was tone because readers were threatening to cancel their subscriptions.

Support groups, **housing file,** *fiction,* non-fiction, ***magazines,*** newspapers, *emergency referrals,* **service referrals - accountants, attorneys, carpenters, chiropractors, dentists, lawncare, plumbers, therapists - dances,** coming out groups, safe sex kits, a place to hang out...

All at the **Lesbian Resource Center**

1208 E. Pine
Seattle, WA 98122
206/322-3953

Full-Bodied Bouquet

by Loraine Hutchins

Big women make me want to cuddle, wiggle and dive into their soft grab-able flesh. I'm attracted to them the same way I'm attracted to myself, settling down for a self-loving session with my own bountiful fleshiness. Recent big-women screen successes like Baghdad Cafe, Sugar Baby, and Hairspray really turn me on.

The Fat Dykes Float in San Francisco's annual Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade is so magnificent! There's something exquisitely fierce about us parading our big beauty, transcending the message that tells us to hide. One of my favorite fat dykes hails from Provincetown, Massachusetts. This magnificent 300 lb. woman taught herself to wind-surf, braving the ridicule of local male teens heckling her from the wharf. After she learned, she started her own windsurfing business, specializing in teaching other big women the joys of windsurfing in the P'town bay.

What she taught me is that you can be fit at any weight. And that it's attitude that's far more important than any actuary table or other person's standards of what's right for you.

We all have hang-ups about our bodies, regardless of our size. Ann Landers reported in a recent column that 150,000 U.S. women die each year from anorexia and bulimia. 53% of high school girls are unhappy with their bodies, and fashion models weigh 23% less than the average woman. The diet industry makes $33 billion a year. Even the well-known fact that most people who take off weight put it back on doesn't cut their profits. Women value being thin more than success or love, according to a recent Glamour magazine survey. We're only talking about straight women, you say. Ha! We queers hardly transcend these societal pressures. Just look at the lack of strong large woman images in our own magazines, the derogatory comments made about big women at women's events, the internalized self-hatred in your own soul.

A lot of this is shame about our sexual power, I know. Do we have a right to sexual energy, right now, as we are today? You bet!

I push myself to take risks, to play out my fantasies in the present, just as I AM, *not* when I lose x amount of pounds, *not* when I've changed my muscle/fat ratio to a better place through enough exercise, *not* after I've worked through all my incest and addiction issues in therapy,

but NOW.

Pushing myself to take risks and playing out my fantasies in the present helps me gather the courage I need to face each day. It's that simple. It also pushes a lot of people's buttons about their stereotypes about fat people and about women over 40. That's *their* problem. We all have the right to be ourselves as fully as we can be.

But does this mean I'm completely happy with my weight, with my body as it is today? No way. I wish I could say so but it wouldn't be honest. I've seesawed between 250 and 150 and back again the past few years. So have several of my girlfriends. One even got below her normal weight taking fat shots from a doctor, but stopped and gained it back because she was afraid she was becoming addicted to them. There are real health problems to being overweight and to eating compulsively. I don't want to discount them because I struggle with them intimately. An excessive amount of stomach and leg padding, for instance, does change the nature of my orgasms and my breathing, not to mention my blood pressure. When I eat unwisely I sink into inertia and this affects everything in my life. But here's the interesting irony: I've never, ever been able to lose weight or get in shape by guilt-tripping or punishing myself. My psyche just doesn't work that way. When I snap out of my depression I take care of myself, not the other way around. So what's the solution? Beats me. There's something paradoxical about my self-imaging, I know that. I have to both love myself the way I am AND be able to visualize myself as healthy and strong at a lighter weight, to be able to let go of my binge urges and trust that I can be powerful if I'm not as big.

This paradox will probably continue to 'shape' me as I make my way through meals and lovers and learn to live my life.

Loraine Hutchins, who starred as the big woman cumming on screen in Betty Dodson's *Selfloving: Portrait of a Woman's Sexuality Seminar* video, is famous for her Wonder Woman With a Hard On persona and goes top-free as many places as possible. ▼

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[1] Ann Landers column, *Washington Post* 4/29/92

BETTY DODSON

Artist, author, and sex-educator, Betty has been a public advocate for women's sexual liberation for two decades. She is an international authority on sexual self-help, and her book, *Sex for One*, has inspired thousands of women and men to explore their erotic selves and seek new sexual horizons.

presents

SELFLOVING

video portrait of a women's sexuality seminar

We are ten women, ages 28 to 60, interacting in the nude to confront false modesty. Accepting and loving our bodies is our first step toward sexual liberation. We discover we are not alone in our search for sexual expression and support each other to explore pleasure creatively. While engaging in pleasure rituals designed to enhance sexual selfknowledge, we learn to play again. The visual images of each other's sexual response enlightens us, and we are inspired to take the next step on our sexual and spiritual path.

Forming a tribal circle, we practice different breathing patterns to increase our sexual energy. We experiment with different sexual positions and pelvic movements, using electric vibrators for clitoral stimulation. The erotic finale is a celebration of selfloving filled with authentic orgasms.

Group massage gives us sensual touch without sexual demand. Each woman experiences the loving hands of four others simultaneously, with everyone both giving and receiving unconditional love. In the closing circle, we chant with a unified voice and release our orgasmic energy to heal Mother Earth.

"...daring intimacy!" "...moving!" "...leaves you warm and happy."

BETTY DODDSON, BOX 1933 MURRAY HILL, NEW YORK, NY 10156

NW COMMUNITY NEWS

Northwest Leadership Retreat: Saturday, April 30, 10am-5:30pm, at Evergreen State College in Olympia.

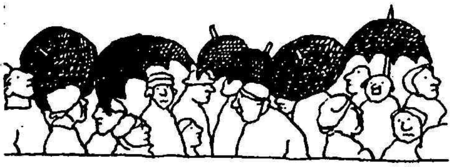
Here's an opportunity to meet with others interested in working on bisexual leadership issues; learn skills to use on local, state, regional and national levels! There's no previous experience necessary, only an interest in networking and developing your leadership skills. The event is free.

Six workshops are planned, including: Developing New Leadership, Starting your Own Non-Profit (or BiNet) Group, Fighting the Right, Fundraising, the Vision thing for the Bi Community of Tomorrow.

Lani Ka'ahumanu, bisexual organizer and author from San Francisco, will be speaking on 'Bi Inclusion and Bi's in the Media,' on Thursday, April 28, at Evergreen. Friday, she'll be in Seattle, visiting SBWN.

Call the Evergreen Queer Alliance (also known as LGBPRC) at 206-866-6000 for more information.

Evergreen's Gay Lesbian Bisexual People's Resource Center has pulled their usual cosponsorship of the L/G Film Festival, held this same weekend, due to non-bi inclusion. They decided to spend the allocated funds on this more inclusive event, and have given a substantial cash donation to South Sound BiNet.



Unity in Diversity, regional conference of LGB student leaders from colleges across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and SW Canada, will be on May 6, 7, 8 at Western Washington U. in Bellingham. Focus is on coalition building, campus activism, meeting LGB student needs, and networking. Saturday workshops include Building Allies, Internet, HOW on campus, and Educating Peers about Safer Sex. Information available at 206-650-6120.

Some days, even in the midst of a crowd
We feel so alone.
And yet, if we look around -
beyond our isolation,
We could discover there are those
who want to share

The Women's Connection, a mentoring and resource network for women in transition invites you to a brown-bag lunch on the first Tuesday of any month, Noon-1pm in the Dexter Horton Building, 710 2nd Av, Conference Room A, Seattle. This is a place for women to share experiences and reflections, seek advice on issues large or small, or just talk about what's on your mind. Contact Virginia McHenry at 684-8138 for more information.

!WOMEN TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!
March & Rally on Saturday, April 30th at Seattle Central Community College. Volunteers are needed to help with this event; phone Kata at Seattle Rape Relief: 325-5531.

TOLL-FREE HOTLINE
Seattle Counseling Services for Sexual Minorities has a new statewide toll-free phone number: 1-800-5B-PROUD. King County callers still use 282-9307. Call for phone support, information and referral, and crisis intervention counseling Monday-Friday, Noon to 9PM. The Connections Line is a Safe Schools 'Tracking Project' report site. Incidents of harassment or discrimination based on sexual orientation can be reported during hotline hours.

SanFran BiLine
San Francisco Bi groups have joined under one phone number. The new Bisexual Resources Line at 415-703-7977 accesses voicemail for Bay Area Bisexual Network (BABN), BiPOL the San Francisco Bisexual/Lesbian/Gay Political Action Organization, the Bisexual People of Color Caucus (3X3), San Francisco/East Bay Bi-Friendly, or the magazine *Anything That Moves: Beyond the Myths of Bisexuality* (*ATM*). This line is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The BiNet Northwest Regional Conference in Portland, Oregon in February yielded a new set of National Delegates to serve for the next year. They are Steven Millman, Tacoma, WA; Aire Norell, Portland, OR; and alternates Drew Robinson, Seattle WA; and Suzanne Wall, Portland, OR. Planning has already begun for the 1995 conference, being hosted by South Sound BiNet, and will probably be at Evergreen State College in Olympia.

The Lesbian Resource Center is moving to a new home! By the end of April, they'll be at 1808 Bellevue Av (near Olive St), Seattle Wa. 98102. They'll have 1900 square feet of meeting room, conference room, library, and drop-in space. If you'd like to help move (especially if you have access to a truck) phone them at 322-3953. Come to the housewarming party on Thursday, May 19, 5-7pm.

Seminars for women and men of the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender communities are offered on Capitol Hill. Call 935-9313 to inquire or register:

***CHOOSING PARTNERS DIFFERENTLY**
Learn how to change your patterns of 'attraction & choosing' and 'intimacy pacing' to get where you want to go in your next relationship.
Fri, evening, April 15 & Sat April 16, 10am-4pm
Sandra Jo Palm, MA.

***SKILLS FOR A LIFETIME RELATIONSHIP**
Learn more about heart-to-heart communication, asking for change, preventing and resolving conflict, and more.
Fri, May 20, 7-9:30PM & Sat, May 21, 10AM-4PM
Ruth Baetz, MSW & Sandra Jo Palm, MA.

***BUT I THOUGHT I WAS HETEROSEXUAL...**
Weekly support group for married or formerly married women who are exploring the lesbian world. Sandra Jo Palm, facilitator.

Bi Parent, Good Parent

by Margaret Skow

Sandra F

I remember the day about one year ago when a co-worker came up to me and asked, 'Do you think you will be able to raise your son being the way you are?'

I was both shocked and angered by the question. How dare this man raise such a question to my face in such a derogatory manner! I stayed calm and answered as politely as I could that I was an adequate mother and my sexual preference really did not have any bearing on how I raise my child.

As I reflect back on the exchange I realize that I could have responded in several different ways, but the way that I chose was to educate the person asking. Most everyone at my office knows or has heard through third parties of my sexual orientation. Not everyone feels comfortable about it and I do get asked questions about my perceived and actual 'life style.' I came out at work so I could quit lying about my relationship; I felt very uncomfortable calling my girlfriend my boyfriend just to avoid judgement.

I have come to realize that maybe my sexual preference does have some small significance in my parenting skills. My son is now six years old and appears to be a well adjusted young man who will grow to (hopefully) become a productive citizen. That is my major goal as a parent. I have been questioned as to whether he will grow up to be confused. My response to that is, 'Any more confused than other children in our society today?' My son has spent his life exposed to several loving, committed, long lasting, same sex relationships. He has the opportunity to view important people who love, respect and honor each other. I do not feel that this is a bad thing. He sees what a relationship is about, not the sexes of the parties involved. Already he has hinted that he is aware that the people he loves are not in relationships like those portrayed by the media and I expect that soon I will be bombarded by questions concerning that, but for the time being I hope that he is learning some important lessons from those around him.

On occasion I have doubted my skills as a parent (every normal person does), but I have come to the conclusion that I will make mistakes and that every day I will learn something new. My son is the most important person in my life and he is an asset, my companion and soul mate. He gives meaning to my life and has taught me to look at things with a totally different perspective. He has given me many gifts; the biggest one was teaching me to love myself and others. There are many others but too many to list here. I shall never regret being a parent. ▼

My Id & You

by Syrenka L Slettebak

the sight of your golden hair on a moonlit night
sends me flying into a watery dreamstorm...
a passion that sweeps me up in thunderous waves
along a silver sand shore.

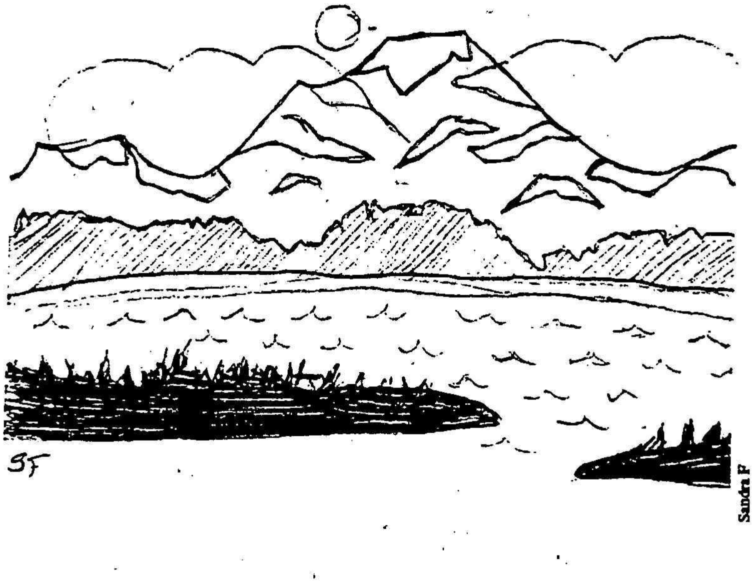
i roll over black rocks, tiny red crabs,
skeletons of clams, and hard gray cases
of moonsnail eggs, lying open in round
mounds before me.

i uproot kelp-beds from the rocky floor;
seaweed sticks to my eyes, afraid i will
see the horror of the creatures
i come rolling, crashing by.

even the fish, who are used to violent
oceans, are frightened of my thrashing
act. the moon changes course, and then
at once, i feel the waves curl back.

the ocean throws me onto the beach
again, scraping my thighs and hands,
bruising my flesh. your moonface
hovers above me, wondering what

journey takes me this time.
the ocean swells in my mouth;
i pull you to my salty lips and
let you taste water from my tongue.



Sandra F

Naomi Wolf's *Fire with Fire:* Disagreeing with Feminism

by Lynne Vickery

This is a dangerous book. With her latest social critique, Wolf turns her attention from the fashion industry and beauty myth-makers to the academic feminist community, or what she terms the 'insider feminists.' With her sloppy analysis, intuitive but intellectually bankrupt criticisms and her gushy, oh-so-hetero visions of the future, Wolf turns feminism into a very easy target. While I would never hold an author responsible for the many and varied interpretations of her book, the limitations of Wolf's work - not in and of themselves a hit upon feminism - easily lend themselves to, in her own words, 'the opposition's' arsenal.

The first and biggest problem I had with this book is that Wolf never defines feminism. She uses this book as an arena to criticize feminists and posit what she calls 'Power feminism,' which she separates from 'Victim feminism' by virtue of a quick checklist one might read in a pamphlet (If you answer yes to three or more of the statements on the right, you may have a problem...). Wolf's definition emerges as one reads and it is a definition I find to be lacking.

> 'Victim feminism is when a woman seeks power through an identity of powerlessness... This feminism has slowed women's progress, impeded their self-knowledge.'

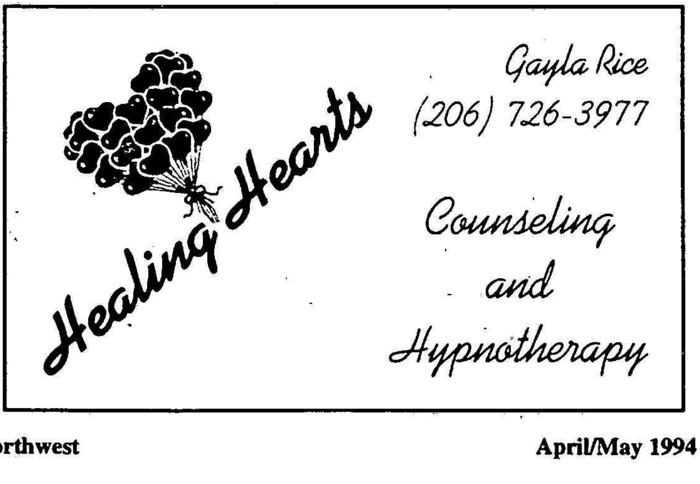
She starts by saying we are on a 'journey into the Egalitarian Era' and claims that feminism is the fight for women's equality. For several years, feminists of color have been asking, 'Equality? equal to what?' The notion that women would be equal to men presupposes that firstly, all men are equal and have equal access to society's riches, a supposition that denies any racial or class-based imbalance of power between different groups of men. Further, if one were to assume feminists were working for equality to *white* men, then it logically follows that any gains toward equality (white) women were to make would be based on the same racial and class power differences as that between men. In other words, this is a racist and elitist definition. Wolf's critique of academic feminism fails to incorporate (or even acknowledge) academic feminists' most recent and redeeming quality; that is, the study of identity politics or the dialectic of oppression. She pays only token (forgive the pun) attention to the realities of race, class, sexual orientation and the way these impact our understandings of 'women,' and therefore, feminism.

Wolf loosely defines a 'feminist' as a powerful woman, one who perceives herself as powerful and uses that power to her advantage. She admits that women are victimized but asserts we are not 'natural' victims. Discussing the book's basic premise, she writes, 'Victim feminism is when a woman seeks power through an identity of powerlessness.... This feminism has slowed women's progress, impeded their self-knowledge.' In this chapter, 'Victim Feminism Versus Power Feminism,' Wolf is at times quite articulate and even eloquent. She is careful to acknowledge the truth about women's lives; we are often victims of violence and assault, usually at the hands of men we know and love. The problem is that, as I see it, Wolf's perceptions about women's victimization are a little off.

> The leap Wolf makes, that *Geraldo* and *Cosmo* will save our feminist soul, seems a bit wide to me.

She says that the focus of many (victim) feminists, 'derives from conditions that were once truer than they are now.' Hmmm... Actually, women are now more likely to be the victims of abuse and violence than ever before (so well researched by Wolf's colleague, Susan Faludi, in *Backlash).* Women's access to necessary resources, such as health insurance or abortion services, is decreasing. I like what Wolf has to say about embracing power and changing our perceptions of ourselves into agents for change and progress, but I strongly disagree with her analysis of how much change and progress we have yet to make.

The best section of the book, and it is very good, is part two, 'What Went Wrong? How So Many Women and Their Movement Parted Ways.' In it, Wolf, with clarity of judgment and compassion for her ancestors, describes the limitations of the feminist movement since the early 1960's. Respectfully, she lays out the map we have traveled on, how we got where were are, why we chose the roads we did. In 'Sins of Omission' (just one of the many self-consciously cute turns of phrase she uses), she talks about the media, women's limited access to it, and how that limited access affects feminist interchange. Using the 'media journey' of Camille Paglia as an example, she writes, 'a hostile and unbalanced mass media combines with scarcity of real forums to stymie discussion about women's issues. The absence of critical rejoinder ensured that Paglia's mischaracterizations of feminism went without challenge.' Wolf outlines the process of locking women out of the higher ranks of the media, silencing women and cornering feminists into making ridiculous-sounding slogans. In turn, feminists scorn the 'mainstream' press and TV, thus alienating themselves from the majority of American women. She aptly writes,


Healing Hearts
Gayla Rice
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Counseling
and
Hypnotherapy

'the profoundly important forum of women's talk shows is left to languish as an ill-researched, apolitical, but hugely influential domain where normal journalistic standards need not apply... The sexist attitudes that assign these shows such low status keep them unaccountable for the fact that they, more than any other single force, shape the perceptions that lead millions of women to make the political choices they do.' Wolf criticizes feminists for the scorn they have for talk shows and fashion magazines, but doesn't really address the reasons for their scorn (i.e. that fashion magazines perpetuate a notion of beauty that is idealistic at best and dangerous at worst). She embraces this wasteland, heretofore abandoned by feminists, as the up-and-coming fertile soil for progressive thinking. That academic feminists have alienated the 'average' American woman and that these 'second-rate' forms of media have a political potential we can no longer ignore, I will agree to. The leap Wolf makes, that Geraldo and Cosmo will save our feminist soul, seems a bit wide to me.

I stopped reading after Wolf started talking about, 'healing the sexual divide.' She does write beautifully and very personally about the need to develop positive self-images of women loving men. However, to make her point about the sexual joy and life-affirming love hetero women can feel with 'the enemy,' she too easily dismisses the idea of a Rape Culture (the notion that gender socialization being what it is, all men are taught how to rape - it's normal het sex, just without consent). She also overlooks lesbians in her analysis (what if we don't WANT to be with men?) and I wondered if she'd ever heard of bisexuality, after reading the book.

If you're reading this review to decide if you should read *Fire with Fire,* well, I think people ought to read anything and everything they can. One point that Wolf makes in this book is that women should disagree with each other, that our intellectual skill atrophies without exercise. Read the book, then we can discuss it, and, hopefully, disagree. ▼

LET'S TALK ABOUT

MENSTRUATION,

THE ENVIRONMENT

& OUR CULTURE

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 7-9 PM

Ground floor of the Good Shepherd Center
4649 Sunnyside Avenue North
at 50th, in Wallingford

Short presentations, followed by an open discussion, will address topics related to menstruation, such as: cultural symbolism, health, and products.

THIS EVENT IS FREE!

CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED!

All genders are encouraged to attend.
For more information and to reserve childcare,
call 726-0300.
Sponsored by the Women's Environmental Network.

Pioneer Feminist

Nothing to Do but Stay, My Pioneer Mother

Carrie Young

by Lizabeth Coller

This book was written by a daughter, and is a loving tribute to a woman who was strong, and brave, and who valued her children, both her daughters and her son.

Nothing to Do but Stay is a collection of eight stories, telling the tales of family life on the North Dakota prairie during the early part of the century. The first story, The Education of a Family, is the strongest. The author describes the hardship of educating five daughters and one son. The mother does not differentiate between the boy and the girls; all children are to be sent to school, to do well, and to pursue higher education and the benefits that go with it.

The plan was for the two oldest to get through high school, and then get teaching degrees. At that point, they would go to work, and contribute to the costs of educating the next two. The next two would then contribute to the costs for the third set. Things don't always go according to plan, with one daughter not being old enough to work, even with the credentials, and therefore continuing her education until she was old enough to get a job.

One interesting anecdote: when the author, the last of the six, graduates from college, the oldest daughter, Barney, announces she is tired of teaching, and goes to nursing school. Attending classes on an accelerated schedule, she graduates in two and a half years, and goes to work in her new career.

After nursing for only a few months, Barney meets a farmer, and in short order marries and becomes a full-time farm wife. Her mother would say that after seven years of college, her daughter could now reap the rewards of the independence she had earned to make her life easier, instead of taking on the kind of hard work that she herself had always had.

The other stories go into what life was like living on the prairie, cooking and cleaning, sewing, raising food for the family. The characters are well drawn, and the sense of community is very strong.

I found the author's mother to be an incredible woman; to work so hard for her family, and to plan how to make it so her children would not have to work as hard; to have such faith in education, in a time when schooling was not looked upon as a necessity, and during the Dust Bowl years, too. I also see her as a feminist, as she viewed her children as equals, not just in giving all the benefit of education, but in expecting each child to contribute to the family financially.

Ms. Young has also written *The Wedding Dress: Stories from the Dakota Plains,* a collection of fictional short stories. ▼

Let's face it, we all have our problems. Whether it's a perilous polyfidelity predicament or simply how to shop for latex, North Bi Northwest *is here to help. In keeping with the spirit of bisexuality, we offer more than one reply to each question. Send your queeries to our PO box, our wisdom-mongers are standing bi.*

Dear Answer Amazons,

Since I went from identifying as a hetero girl to a bi female, I have socialized with other bi women but not with bi men. Now that 'bi' side of me that likes boys has kicked in and I have the urge to see if any sparks fly with such a bi guy. However, I am terrified of AIDS. When I dated hetero men, I worried much less than I do now, faced with the prospect of sleeping with a man who sleeps with men. Besides, I am well aware of hetero male reluctance to wear condoms, and I fear that bi men are similarly minded. All this said, I still have a need to enter the world of bi men. Help!

Fearful in Fremont

Dearest Fearful in Fremont,

Yes, you are very wise to be terrified of AIDS. In my 'Book of Love' in the chapter on 'Safer Sex' that concern earns you an A+.

My friend in Fremont, also be aware that sex is risky regardless of your partner's sex or sexual orientation. Sex with bi's is riskier because sexually the sky is no limit for us.

I advise you to start your relationships slowly and carefully. You may kiss a healthy mouth and hug without much risk of AIDS. Yes, hug, touch, and kiss until the bi's come home but stop there. In the game of love you must be the umpire. Demand play under safer sex rules or call the game off - no condom - no play. Besides, if your partner does not love you enough to worry about your health, he or she does not belong in your league. Scout for other safer-sex stars.

The Queen of Love wishes you good luck in scoring many safe home runs. Happy hitting and loving to my Fearful in Fremont correspondent.

Queen of Love

Dear Fearful,

First the goddess needs to give bi-men some credit: as a group, particularly those who are out and/or in a group like SBMU, they are highly conscious of the need to use latex and do so.

More importantly, latex is a necessary part of any relationship these days (bi, hetero, male or female). Quit worrying about it and just use it. Make it as natural as putting on clothes, which is admittedly an unnatural but now routine act.

So when a man (any man) says, 'I would really like to have sex with you tonight,' say (if you agree), 'Oh, yes. I'd love to. Do you have condoms?' When he kisses your neck, whisper, 'Condom.' And if he takes off his pants and doesn't reach for latex, say (powerfully), 'No!' Long before you have reached this point, you and he should have already talked about and agreed on the use of latex, so when you say, 'No!' he understands that he is not keeping his agreement.

What every seducer should know is that the easiest way to a seducee's bed is make her/him feel safe. All the 'Fearfuls' out there can leave a copy of this letter out to be seen by the men (and women) in their lives. If latex use is not already agreed upon, whoever is doing the inviting could say something like, 'I bought a great bottle of wine, a pound of chocolate, and a new box of condoms today. Would you share them with me tonight?'

Aphrodite

NYC BiNet Conference Set

by Lisa Coyote

Plan now to attend the international celebration of bisexuality held June 25 in Greenwich Village, New York City. This event is coinciding with "Stonewall 25 - the Year of the Queer," also in NYC.

Stonewall remains one of the most significant events of the gay rights movement. In 1969, police raided a gay bar in Greenwich Village. The riots that broke out focused people's energies and began a sustained effort to bring homosexual (and bisexual) people out of marginalization. The movement that we know today grew out of the positive energy of an ugly police action.

Besides the political significance of Stonewall, there's almost no better reason to visit NYC this summer than to attend a bi gathering. Conferences like this one are a terrific opportunity to meet other bi folk from around the U.S. (or the world). As a tourist, think of all the places you can go on a spontaneous date - ideas are as close as your travel guide. If you meet a special someone, maybe someday you'll visit their home (another trip!), or they'll come visit you. The potential for adventure is limitless.

Keynote speaker is Elise Matthesen, author, poet, musician, storyteller and activist. The conference is being organized with help and participation from BiNet USA, the Bisexual Resource Center, and the New York Area Bisexual Network.

Register by May 1 for a discount on registration fees: $35 for one person, $50 for two people, $60 for three people, and $20 per person for students. After May 1, fees are $45, $60, $75 and $25 respectively.

Accomodations are NOT included in the registration fee, but if you register early, the New York bi group may be able to arrange some kind of home sharing.

For more information, call (212) 592-3698; BiNet USA at (617) 338-9595; or NYABN Message Line at (212) 459-4784. Write to ICCB '94, PO Box 497, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108. E-mail to skyler@panix.com or betenoir@echonyc.com.

Cookbook

K.D. BRYSON

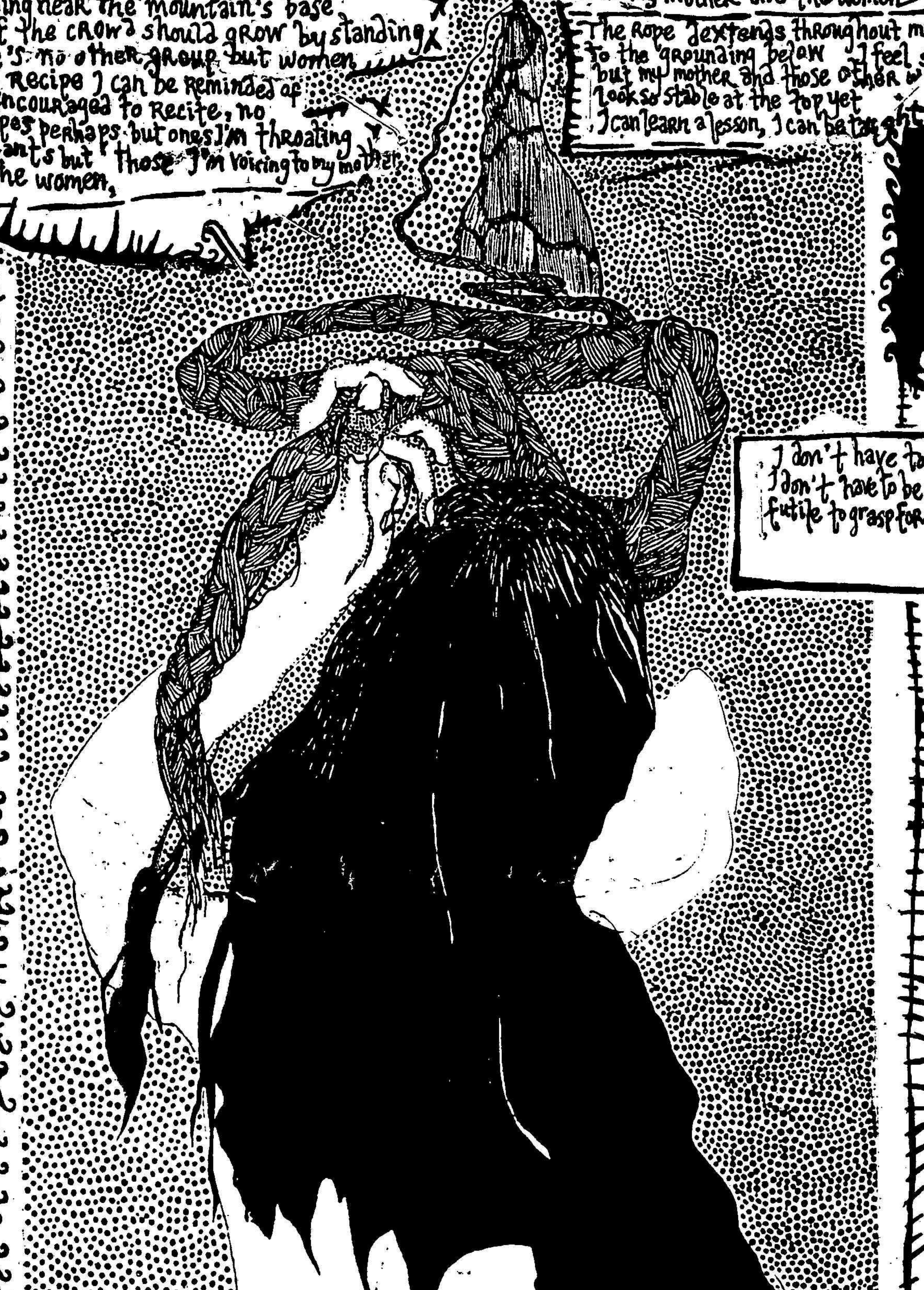
The clearest lesson I've sustained:
standing might be done beside an other.
standing near a mountain/with my mother
there is no other time but summer
I see no one here besides a me/a mother
no one but a me tasting this year's crop of cookies
cinnamonsunnys and jagged-sharps
that's what you baked, mom,

standing near the mountain's base
and if the crowd should grow by standing
there's no other group but women
not a recipe I can be reminded of
nor encouraged to recite, no
no ropes perhaps but ones I'm throating
no chants but those I'm voicing to my mother
and the women,

And throwing a simple radical
stretch itself of rope the farthest way
how odd (my mother stands beside me)
the rope must graze a top and peak a top
we climb up the rope, me mom & the women,
pricking in our whipped fruition
peaking like a candied cherry at the top.
Mom! This is an ice-cream cone! This mountain
to match it all, a non-suspected dish a wish a treat
to match it all and I too now stand on top,
with you my mother and the women

The rope extends throughout my legs
to the grounding below I feel shaky/I feel falling
but my mother and those other women yet
look so stable at the top yet
I can learn a lesson, I can be taught

I don't have to float away
I don't have to be as shredded ropes
futile to grasp for and wispy



fourth line from Katarina Frostensson "Mors Spår" (Mother's Tracks)

Hello, Son...

by Peggy Walsh

I am a strong believer in fuzzy edges, that there are very few yes or no answers or black/white either/or situations in this life. This holds true for me on the circumstance of motherhood. Over years past, people, coworkers and such, would ask me if I have any children. Well, the answer depends on who's asking and what our relationship is. I often gave some version of 'yes.' In the mid to late '60's I lived with one of my sisters and her husband and five, then six, children. The husband was an executive, typically pretty disengaged from the personal aspects of family life. My sister and I were allies. I feel I co-raised my nieces and nephews while I was there, and we remain close now.

The other equally, if not more, nebulous situation is the child I relinquished for adoption when he was born in May, 1965. I've wondered how to speak of this. 'Yes, I have a son. He's 11, 18, 25 years old and I have no idea where he is or what he does or who he is...' This came up in conversation with a coworker once. I told her I'd given a child up for adoption and she looked horrified and said, 'Oh! I could *never* do that!' calling up implications of abandoning babies on chilly doorsteps. Ouch! Never mind, drop that subject!

Do I have the right to say 'son?' He's somebody else's son. But if not that, then what *would* I call him? I've asked a few adult adoptees how they felt about it. The replies ranged from a shrug of indifference to a heated rant on the whole issue of adoption and relationships and parenting and responsibility and government (agency) interference. Nothing really useful to my situation, so I just improvised as I went along.

Then one Saturday morning late last October, as I had one leg out the door on my way to a Hands Off Washington/BiNet Regional meeting, with a detour on the way to see to my tenant's report that her refrigerator was electrocuting her, my phone rang. Shall I answer it? Oh, well...yes.

It was a woman calling from Sacramento, the Western regional representative for the adoptee/match agency, ALMA. Her errand was to tell me the name/address/phone number of my son, now named Kevin.

Bang! What is my priority here? Electrocution by appliance seems pretty hot; people are counting on me to be at the HOW meeting, but...

We had our first (since my 19th birthday when he was four days old) conversation that evening when the distractions had settled down. We talked for a couple of hours about family and fishing and cars, touched on religion and capitalism. I was pleased to hear him voice values I would have wanted to instill, and wondered how he came to have them. He lives in New Jersey near where most of the rest of my family is, and was raised by fine people. We agreed to exchange photos - old, medium, current.

I wrote up a family tree/family history from my parents down. Not including Kevin and his family, this consists of seven children, nineteen grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren (three added in 1993). There was a letter to go with - sort of a 'who I am, where you came from, what I think about' cover letter. That turned out to be the hardest letter I've ever written in my life. It's sort of the *ultimate* blind date or personal ad. One wants to give a good impression, but not try to be impressive. It's got a sort of mirror-image twist, though. On a blind date, there's very little investment - at least you've probably got a dinner or movie out of it, and if the person turns out to be useless, then who cares, just move on. In my case, the relationship already exists, and this is the getting-to-know-you part. What sort of things does he want to know? My life's stories? Our brief joint history? My childhood? My life since 1965? Family legends? I'm full of stories, but don't know what to offer. How involved does he want to be?

I finished this letter and shipped it off, then sat back to wait for a reaction and Kevin's photos. Time went by; weeks went by. I started to wonder, get anxious. It made sense that he might need to sit back and think about all this as he found me so easily and so soon after he thought to look. But another week went by and I stopped telling people my story, because I didn't know what my story was.

On Christmas Eve, there was a large envelope in my mail, containing an explanation for the delay (holiday parties, work, family visiting), family news, and a stack of photos (Kevin as a kid, a teenager [resembling two of my nephews], with his wife and two sons). Since then I've gone around at a New Year's Eve party and the BiNet/Northwest conference 'boring people with baby pictures.' Is he like me? Mmmmm... I think so. There seems to be some resemblance in the photos, a likeness in our smiles. We seem to be similar in temperament. He's treating the extraordinary circum-

continued on next page

Keep On Marching!™

STONEWALL 25

JUNE 26 1994

On June 26th, 1994, the International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People will take place in New York City. It promises to be one of the largest human rights marches in history.

Come celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.
Make your plans NOW! You can help make Stonewall 25 a success!

■ I WANT TO BE A PART OF HISTORY

○ I want to volunteer. Please add my name to your mailing list.
○ I want to host a dinner party to benefit Stonewall 25.
○ I want to contribute financially. Enclosed is my check for:
○ $500 ○ $250 ○ $100 ○ $50 ○ $25 ○ Other $ ________.

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE/ZIP PHONE #

Make checks payable to: STONEWALL 25. Send to: 208 West 13th Street, New York, NY 10011.
For more information call: 212-439-1031. To order STONEWALL 25 collectable and wearable merchandise call: 800-IS-PROUD. For travel or accomodations: 800-216-1880.
Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Daughter of the Moon

by Ash

I want to tell you a story. It was told to me by a little girl who calls herself Alix.

Once upon a time, the moon decided she wanted a child, a daughter. This was to be a very special child, since the moon has very few children, and all of them were wanted intensely. But, since the moon is the moon, and not a person, it was a difficult problem. You see, the moon has to find a woman, a human woman, to have a daughter for her.

So the moon looked and looked. She searched all over the world. No one was willing to have a child for the moon. Finally, after much hard searching, the moon found a woman willing to have a child for her. Now this woman had already had several children, and she wasn't the best of mothers, but the moon had no choice. It was this woman or nothing.

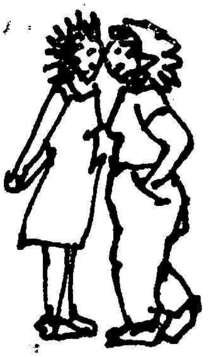
So the woman had a baby for the moon. Like I said, the woman wasn't the best of mothers. She didn't always treat the little girl like she deserved to be treated, she let bad things happen to her, and worst of all, she couldn't love her. She couldn't love her because every time she looked at that child she didn't see the child, she saw the moon. And everyone knows how difficult it would be to live with the moon. Very few people can deal with it or understand.

So anyway, the girl grew. But she grew up frightened and confused and unhappy. She didn't know why. She knew there must be some reason. Eventually she found a wise woman to help her. This wise woman couldn't change anything, but taught the girl how to live, how to be, and how to grow healthy.

Now she still didn't understand the why, but she was better able to live a happy life. So one night, the girl was sitting outside admiring the beautiful night sky, and wondering. Why, why had her life been so hard, what was the reason she was there, and other hard questions. And she idly asked the question out loud.

Imagine her surprise at being answered! The moon explained to her why she was unloved, why life had been so hard, and loved her as no one had ever loved her. The girl was filled with love and happiness. She was no longer alone, and she was loved for who she was. She asked the moon, "but why did you never tell me this before?" And the moon answered, "Because you could not hear it before, you had not learned to listen."

And that is the story of how the Moon's daughter found her true mother. She went on to have many wonderful adventures, but she hasn't told me about them yet. ▼



Liz Nania

Hello Son continued from previous page

stance of our now 'knowing' each other very matter-of-factly, as in, 'OK, now here we are.' It's how I react to life circumstances, absorbing information, while people around me are looking for effusive display. We separately refused the opportunity to 'tell our story' to all the world via Sally Jessy Raphael on TV. I resent that sort of intrusion and trivializing/sensationalizing of one's personal and emotional life. We figure when we do meet in person, in June when I've gone East for my mother's birthday and maybe Stonewall, we'll do it at a pizza joint, or over at somebody's house.

Kevin reminded me my grandson's birthday is in January. It's no surprise to me that a 29-year old man is married and has children, but it takes a couple of minutes to get used to owning the identity 'grandmother.' Most people go through a transitional step to get there. If I send the kid a card who will it be from? He has grandmas from his parents; he's never heard of me; where will he think I came from?

There've been some surprises in how I find myself reacting to my now having Kevin in my known life. I was surprised by a sense of Responsibility. No. Accountability. No one's asking, but I'm pleased to be able to say I've lived a morally responsible life.

I felt suddenly plunged into Establishment, and have resisted it, but it's as though I now fit into The Plan, how The System programs the cogs in the wheel. The positive view of that is a feeling of being grounded, of circle closed and loose ends connected.

This experience has tapped my *invisibility* insecurity. I, and especially my pregnancy, was invisible then, kept in the closet. Now I know where the kid is, and tell people of my new family situation. I get brief positive acknowledgment, but then people forget. It's not like I have a cute baby to show off. I feel a little neglected, and envy women whose significant life milestones are publicly celebrated. I'm sad to have carried that magic and anguish alone.

I've been pregnant twice, and neither has been acknowledged as an important life experience. They both were a pretty big deal to me. I get uncomfortable, and even resentful, when co-workers celebrate their pregnancies, with lots of attention from others, meanwhile discounting that I've had similar experiences, because I'm not married, raising children.

I'm looking forward to meeting Kevin in person this summer. I feel we have some serious talking to do, exchanging essential information. Then we'll just get along with being family, I suppose, working out what our relationship is. Talk to me after June if you want to know more about how it goes. ▼

Now, a pitch for the organization that facilitated our reunion: Adoptees' Liberty Movement Association (ALMA), PO Box 727, Radio City Station, New York NY 10101-0727. They are an international group that keeps a database of adoptees and birth-parents (and sometimes adoptive parents), looking for a match of information. Regional chapters have support groups and search-workshops.

Washington Adoption Rights Movement (WARM) has regional support groups and search advice in Washington State. They're at 5950 6th Ave S, Seattle WA 98108. Phone 206-767-9510.

International Soundex Reunion Registry (ISRR) keeps a registry of anyone directly involved in an adoption, and matches entrants' data. PO Box 2312, Carson City, NV 89702.

Another Final Decision: Transsexuals in SBWN

by Anabelle P.

Once again the transsexual issue has come up. Last fall, Chris Flanagan submitted a proposal that:

The policy prohibiting transsexual/transgender women from attending the Monday Night Newcomer's meetings be dropped, as well as any other policy decisions that bar transsexual/transgender women from full participation in SBWN activities.

Following the SBWN process for deciding any policy change, this proposal was published in the December/January 1994 issue of *North Bi Northwest*, and several meetings were held for discussion, at both Sunday night and Monday night meetings.

On January 30,1994, further discussion was held, and numerous votes were taken. The end result was that all post-operative transsexual women were eligible to join SBWN and attend any meeting or event, and any transsexual woman who was a member under the old policy was grandmothered in.

Since this policy excluded pre-operative transexual women, we met again on February 27, 1994, to work out further guidelines for participation in SBWN. Some women felt self-definition as a woman was good enough, while others thought at least two years of cross-living was a valid filter. Since everyone could live with the compromise of one year, the new policy is:

Transgender/transsexual women are eligible for attendance and membership in SBWN if they have been living full-time as a woman for at least one year.

Transsexual/transgender women with less than one year of full-tine cross living are encouraged to participate in mixed-gender bisexual activities such as BiNet meetings, mixed social events, and related current activities.

As with any SBWN policy, there is always room for discussion and review. ▼

Untitled

by Jill Seidenstein

This body..The body.
It.
She.
It hurts. This BODY.
Who owns you? Certainly
not
NOT
me.
This pain is new. I don't want
to own it.
It splits me in parts.
My soft, ripe flesh has been
melting away.
Is it because I am really
the Wicked Witch of the West?
'Dies it melt in water? Go down the
drain,
to feed the marine life of Puget Sound?

Maybe.
Maybe,
While I was sleeping, Someone came,
& switched bodies.

I cry all the time.
My uterus tenses & clenches.
My soft stomach a locus of pain.
The pelvis holds it in her lovely
Cup.
Bleeding holds no release. Only
Sleep.

Advertising

North Bi Northwest welcomes advertising from bi-friendly businesses, individuals, organizations and services. Our advertising rates are as follows:

Business card size: $10/issue
Quarter page: $20/issue
Half page: $40/issue
Full page: $80/issue
2 consecutive issues: 15% discount
3 consecutive issues: 30% discount

For more information call (206) 783-7987 & leave a message.

NbiNW's Creator Reports In

Dear SBWN,

Well, here I am, all too far away from my home in Fremont, yet somehow making a home in San Francisco.

It's strange to be living in this town again, after two years in the 80's. I said I'd never come back, that I was done with living places that weren't home, that I wanted to let my roots settle into the wet, blackberry covered soil of Seattle.

Then I was offered a job that I couldn't refuse, my girlfriend broke up with me, and I suddenly found myself in a new city with a new job and a new life - all in the space of about three weeks.

That was last June. But, were I the sort of person who ascribes meaning to the chaos of events that make up our lives, I'd surely say that someone somewhere wants me down here, because everything good that could happen to me seems to have.

I got an incredibly beautiful apartment in the Castro right above former SBWN member and friend Claudia Smelser. I rented it sight-unseen over the phone because I was desperate. "I'll take it," I said. "Don't you want to see it first?" she asked. "I'm getting there in eleven days with a 14-foot U-Haul. I'll take it," I said. "Okay," she said.

And so I did. What a wonderful Victorian space - high ceilings, big windows and three blocks from the heart of the Castro. And suddenly I was taken with a desire to paint the walls strong, bright colors. My study is forest green, my bedroom is yellow and we painted the living room grey. It's amazing what you can do when the sun shines all year. Living in a Mediterranean climate, I finally understand what Matisse was doing with color.

Then I found the world's best roommate, through an ad in the Bay Guardian, no less. It said 'Queer woman writer from Seattle seeks reasonable roommate,' and damned if she didn't walk through the door, the third one I interviewed. So I live with the fine and reasonable Ginette, who not only cooks, but bakes! And I even like her boyfriend.

Then there's my job. I'm a reporter for the Associated Press down here, with my two areas of specialization being the queer community and the Internet - a pretty cool combo. I get to write great stuff (today I did a feature about the Star Trek: Federation Science exhibit at the California Academy of Sciences) and I really like the people I work with. There are two lesbians on staff and then me, though it hardly matters, as everyone's so utterly cool that I often forget it's an issue in the world.

I'm also writing a bi-weekly column for AP about the Internet, which goes out over the whole west coast. That's very fun and it means I get to have my fingers in all sorts of virtual pies.

Every time an issue of *North Bi Northwest* comes in the mail, I think about how being its editor for five years is really what made me a reporter, what taught me to write and think about words in an ordered way. So when I sit down to write about the City Council or Apple or gay students on campus, a little bit of *NbiNW* is there too, just at the edges.

What else down here? I'm not doing politics any more, as I'm covering the community and its issues, but I am a member of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, and I expect I'll end up on the board this spring (you know how it is.) Nice folks, and they do important work. I hear the *Seattle Times* may get partners benefits soon. The AP may, someday - maybe by the time I find a partner.

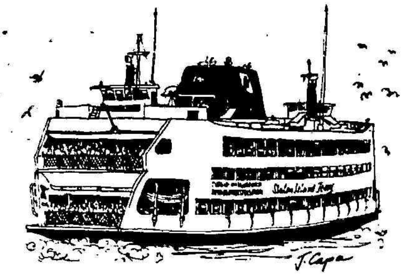
I see bifolk here and there in the city, though not so much. But it's certainly an issue. I was interviewed on a gay radio program here last weekend and they already knew about the book (*Closer to Home*), so I didn't have to do the usual coming out stuff. We turn up everywhere, everyone from the bouncer at the two-step bar to the woman who runs Josie's Juice Joint and Cabaret, the most happening gay performance space on the planet, four blocks away.

So here I find myself, a job to die for, an apartment to die for, friends, even a madrigal group to sing alto in in Berkeley. I don't know what will become of me, though I can't imagine not being in Seattle again, so I'm sure it will happen. I can tell because when I plant plants in the garden here, something deep inside tells me it's wrong because you have to water them all winter.

Although the group passed out of my life several years ago (or my life passed out of it), my seven years as a member of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network created this person that I am now and I can't imagine who or what I would be without those talks, that women's energy and all that tea. I find myself leaning closer and closer to a lesbian existence, but even if I never touch a man ('cause I *know* I'll still keep being attracted to them), I'll *always* be bi, because that's what I am. So thanks to you all, always. Keep up the good fight!

Love,

Beth Weise ▼



Dear Mom: continued from page 1

free family, and I was shown what I believe are sane and constructive ways to deal, along with what seems to be a family tendency to ignore the big bad stuff, imagining it will either go away or sort itself out. Thing is, big stuff does seem to sort itself out to some degree, as our brains work out possibilities, or at least clarification, in the background.

Ten years ago when I told my friend Mary that I thought I was turning into my mother, she gasped in horror as she considered herself in that position. I still think it's true, and it's a good thing. What I meant was my reflection of your values and adventurousness (and feminism?) but with different opportunities. I'm satisfied (mostly) with who I am and the life I've lived. You've done a good job, and I was well launched.

The sort of thing I look back at and wonder, is why, way back when I was seven, when the Delaware River in Trenton was so low the rocks were all exposed, nobody took their shoes off and came with me to see if we really could walk across it. I'd have done it!

Love, Peggy

for Ruth Dorothea (Schweitzer) Walsh, born June 13,1904. ▼

CALENDAR

For locations, confirmation, or more information, call the appropriate message machine and someone will get back to you (with discretion, if requested) For **SBWN** events call **(206) 783-7987**. For all other Seattle events, **(BiNet, SBMU, Polyfi, Bi Fun, etc.)** Call **(206) (Note this is a new number) 728-4533**. ***** denotes multi-gender events.

Sat Apr 2 2nd Bi Second. 2pm, Gasworks Park Picnic. *

Sat Apr 2 Big Bi Fun. 9pm @ Bulldog News, Broadway Market. *

Mon Apr 4 SBWN Newcomer meeting. 7:15pm. Topic: Sex & sexual attraction.

Tue Apr 5 Bluestockings. 7pm @ Devra's, Wallingford. *In a Different Voice* by Carol Gilligan.

Sun Apr 10 SBWN meeting. 6pm. Topic: Body image.

Sun Apr 10 SSBN meeting. 6pm, Tacoma. Topic: Bi's in relationships, monogomy vs nonmonogomy. *

Mon Apr 11 SBMU meeting. 7pm. Topic: Women and bi men.

Wed Apr 13 SBWN live phone answer 8:30-10:30pm.

Wed Apr 13 BiNet meeting. 7pm @ Peggy's, Ballard. *

Sat Apr 16 BiBike ride: 10am, Gasworks Park; to picnic, Noon at Kenmore Park. Join us at either end.

Sat Apr 16 Big Bi Fun, **8pm** in Broadway Market. **!Note new time! ***

Sat Apr 16 SSBN Big Fun Club, 6pm @ Saigon Rendesvous, Olympia. *

Mon Apr 18 SBWN Newcomer meeting. 7:15pm. Topic: Bisexual community/ Queer community.

Thu Apr 21 SBWN live phone answer, 8:30-10:30pm.

Fri Apr 22 SBMU social. 7pm @ Left Bank Books, on to Belltown or Pioneer Square.

Fri Apr 22 SSBN women's meeting. 7pm, Tacoma.

Sun Apr 24 SBWN meeting. 6pm.Topic: Confronting stereotypes.

Thu Apr 28 BiDinner, speech with Lani Ka'ahumanu, bi organizer from San Francisco. 7pm, Olympia. * **Fri. in Seattle!**

Sat Apr 30 Big Bi Fun. 8pm, Bdway Mrkt *

Sat Apr 30 Northwest Bisexual Leadership Retreat, 10am-5:30pm, Evergreen State College, Olympia. Details on pg 6. *

Sun May 1 SSBN organizational potluck. 6pm, Tacoma. *

Mon May 2 SBWN Newcomer meeting. 7:15. Topic: Issues of monogamy.

Mon May 2 2nd Bi Second. 6:30pm in Broadway Market. Find a movie to see. *

Tue May 3 Bluestockings. 7pm; book TBA.

Wed May 4 SBWN live phone answer, 7--10pm.

Wed May 4 SBWN facilitators' collective meeting. 7:15 pm @ Theressia's, Capitol Hill.

Sun May 8 SBWN meeting. 6pm. Topic: Relationship with your Mom.

Mon May 9 SBMU meeting. 7pm. Topic: What is bisexuality: personal perspectives.

Tue May 10 SBWN board meeting. 7pm @ Theressia's, Capitol Hill.

Wed May 11 BiNet meeting. 7pm @ ben's, Wallingford. *

Sat May 14 Polyfidelity Potluck. 6:30pm @ Pilgrim Congregational Chrch, Bdwy. *

Sat May 14 Big Bi Fun. 8pm, Bdwy Mkt *

Sat May 14 SSBN Big Fun Club. 7pm @ Cafe Wa, Tacoma (6th Av & N State St). *

Mon May 16 SBWN Newcomer's meeting. 7:15pm Topic: Sexuality & the world.

Thu May 19 SBWN live phone answer, 8:30-10:30pm.

Sun May 22 SBWN Meeting. 6pm Topic: Group sex.

Fri May 27 SBMU social. 7pm. Folklife @ S. entrance of Center Hse (by Yukon Jack)*

Sat May 28 Big Bi Fun. 8pm, Bdwy Mkt.*

Mon May 30 SBWN Newcomer meeting. 7:15pm. Topic: Telling our Stories.

Thu Jun 2 2nd Bi Second. 7pm Cafe Cielo*

Sun Jun 5 SBWN Meeting. 6pm Topic: Surviving the anti-gay movement.

Wed Jun 8 BiNet meeting. 7pm @ Lizabeth's, Wallingford. *

Sun Jun 26 Stonewall 25/Pride March/ Rally *

SBWN (Seattle Bisexual Women's Network) meets regularly on alternate Sundays, 6pm, and has Newcomer meetings on alternate Mondays, 7:15pm. For more information, call our message machine. Note our occasional live phone answer times.

Bluestockings is an SBWN-affiliated feminist women's reading group that meets on the first Tuesday of the month, unless that day falls on the 2nd, in which case they'll meet on the second Tuesday. They try to alternate between fiction and non-fiction.

SBMU (Seattle Bisexual Men's Union) is a men's anti-sexist support and social group that has discussion meetings on the second Mondays of the month at Pilgrim Congregational Church, room 304 (enter from 10th Av). On fourth Fridays of the month there's a social event.

Big Bi Fun Club meets every other Saturday night at 8pm by the stairs next to Bulldog News in the Broadway Market. All bi-friendly people are welcome to join us as we gather, then decide together what activity we are going to go out and do. It's a great way to meet people and have fun as you promote bi visibility.

Polyfidelity Group: Discussion, stories, literature, philosophizing about multipartner relationships, responsible non-monogamy.

Second bi Second, a floating social event on the Second of every month. Its theme is meant to be more family-oriented than Big Bi Fun.

BiNet, the Bisexual Network of Seattle, is a multi-gender group dedicated to providing information about bisexuality, promoting bisexual visibility, and drawing together bi-friendly people for Big Fun. BiNet has spun off several small social, support and special-interest organizations.

SSBN (South Sound BiNet) is a multi-gender organization providing bisexual community in Thurston, Pierce and S. King Counties. They have women's, men's and mixed events, including support groups, political action, education, and socials. You'll find them at PO Box 5813, Tacoma WA 98415-0813, or (206) 627-2678.